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FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 and duties vested in it. Nədeyər yidem suffer no jural or ritual disabilities because they are so much inferior in numbers to their brother segments.

The Principle of Segmentation in the Lineage

There are two factors of great importance in the dynamics of the lineage system: the principle of segmentation in the lineage and the connexion between lineage aggregation and locality.

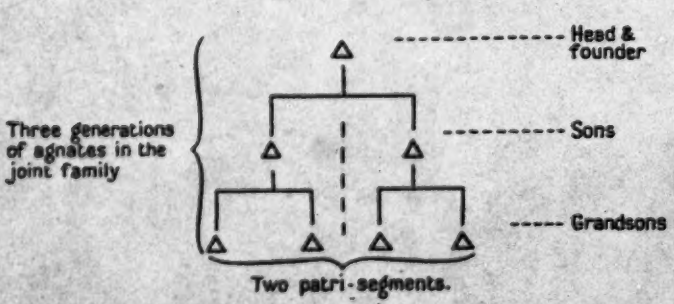
A striking characteristic of the Tale lineage is the rigorous precision with which its members fall into a set of hierarchically articulated segments, of homologous form but all exactly differentiated both genealogically and functionally (cf. Ch. III). This segmentary differentiation of the lineage follows the pattern of the family even to nomenclature. For the lineage grows out of, and through the medium of, the family, and throughout its existence a lineage develops uniformly, so that it preserves the form in which it was originally moulded.

To put it more accurately, a lineage grows by continuous internal differentiation in successive generations. It grows by the continuous multiplication of its parts, not by the mere accretion of new members. And this takes place by the splitting up of its cells, the minimal segments, into new minimal segments in successive generations. This process follows the lines of cleavage laid down in the joint family.

●596 The polygynous joint family forms an integral unit with respect to its male element, the group of agnates upon which it is based and which gives it stability and continuity. This unity of the joint family is summed up in the concept of the patricentral 'house' (*yir*). But it is a unity superimposed upon a strict cellular differentiation into matricentral 'rooms' (*dugət*), each centred upon a wife.

613 596 The group of male agnates in the joint family constitutes an effective minimal lineage at a given time. Each male is a potential agnatic line; a pair of brothers are two potential segments of a lineage. In terms of their common patrilineal descent this group of males forms a single corporate unit. This is the essential *yir*. But this unity contains within itself two sets of cleavages: firstly, a stratification by generations, and secondly, a differentiation by descent. The generation principle acts in this way (cf.

Hypothetical Genealogy, I



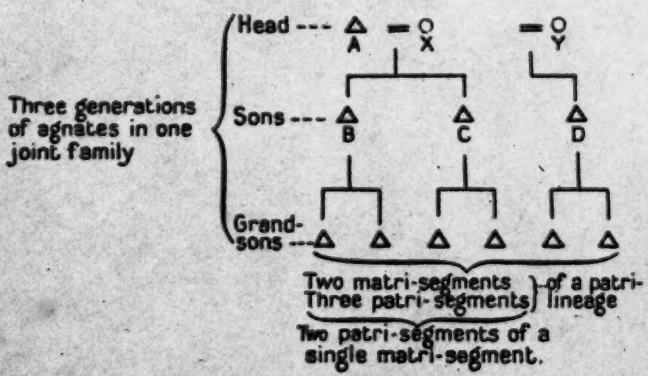
2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the hypothetical genealogy, I): Two brothers who are distinct as individuals are identified with reference to their common father; in all social activities in which they take part as the *sons* of their father they are, as it were, merged. During their father's lifetime they have, in fact, no independent jural status, but are, to speak figuratively again, submerged in his jural personality. Their sons, if the joint family survives as a unit for another generation, will be divided into two patrilateral groups with reference to their respective fathers, but fused into a single jural and economic as well as genealogical unit with reference to their grandfather. In this way the stratification of the effective minimal lineage into generations automatically splits it into patri-segments.[1]

Simultaneously, however, the centrifugal influence of the *dug* is at work. Brothers by the same father may have different mothers. Among the Tallensi this carries with it an emphatic affective discrimination. Half-brothers (*sunzɔ*, pl. *sunzɔp*) are divided by a wedge of sentiment which arises not only out of their independent emotional ties with their particular mothers, but also out of the structural, economic, and moral relations of the *dugət* within the *yir*. It reflects the social autonomy of the *dug* in relation to other *dugət* of the *yir* and the polarity of *dug* and *yir*. Conversely, full (*soog*) brothers have the most intimate bond in the whole gamut of Tale social relations, a bond implying an identity of interests, an emotional cohesion, and mutual loyalty so great as to override any kind of personal or social variance.[2] Thus, within the joint family, maternal origin (*ma dɔŋam*, lit. 'mother's bearing') may divide the sons of one man in sentiment and by an additional index of descent. The patrilateral unit is segmented into incipient matrilateral segments.

What happens in the next generation can best be seen from the following hypothetical genealogy:

Hypothetical Genealogy II



[1] This terminology is borrowed from Daryll Forde, *Marriage and the Family among the Yakö*, L. S. E. Monographs on Anthropology, No. 5.

[2] Cf. my paper 'The Significance of Descent in Tale Social Structure', *Africa*, xiv, 7, 1944, for a discussion of the concept of *soog*.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613
596

We assume a joint family containing three generations of male agnates—the head, his three sons, and his six grandsons, and we neglect the maternal origins of the latter. The six grandsons are divided into three equal patri-segments with reference to their respective fathers, and form a single corporate lineage with reference to their common grandfather. But they are genealogically split into two segments with reference to their respective *grandmothers*; and one of these matrilaterally defined segments (matri-segments) can be split into two patri-segments, of a lower order. Patrilateral origin and matrilateral origin work in polar opposition to each other. An agnatic group united by their patrilateral origin can be subdivided in accordance with their matrilateral origin; and vice versa, an agnatic group united by reference to their matrilateral origin can be subdivided by closer patrilateral origin.

Note that this is not a question of matriliny versus patriliny. Matrilateral origin works as a factor of cleavage only within a patrilineal group, in contradistinction to strict patriliny. Either focus may be the critical one in a given situation; but the other is not thereby obliterated; it merely becomes latent. The pattern operative here is that of the joint family. Patri-segment and matri-segment are related as *yir* and *dug* in the joint family, matri-segment and matri-segment as *dug* and *dug*. They are, indeed, nothing other than the parallel, in the structure of the unending lineage, of the balance of forces that characterizes the joint family. Members of one matri-segment are the offspring of one *dug*, members of one patri-segment may be the offspring of several *dugət*. The natives use the terms *yir* and *dug* to define the relations of lineage segments to one another. *Dug*, then, always bears the implication of a cohesive integral segment within the fissile *yir*. It stands for solidarity as opposed to the latent divisions in the *yir*, obviously reflecting its primary sense of the irreducible, uncleavable matricentral cell within the potentially divided *yir*.

Segmentation by matrilateral lines in the nuclear lineage plays a very important part in the development of both the joint family and the lineage. Economic, jural, and affective relations in the joint family are influenced by matrilateral (*dug*) affiliation; and when in course of time a joint family splits up, fission takes place in the first instance between matri-segments. Members of the same *dug* hold together longer than members of different *dugət*. Thus, two full brothers (*soog*, pl. *saarət*) continue to live in the same homestead, to farm together, to be jurally and ritually one, long after two half-brothers (*sunzɔp*) have found it necessary to separate. Often the split, which inevitably comes between separate lines in the nuclear lineage, is retarded in the case of *soog* brothers, and does not take place until their death. Children of *soog* brothers even after fission have closer ties than children of half-brothers.

These principles of segmentation are not merely a method of genealogical classification of individuals, but an indispensable regulator of corporate activities, operating at every level of lineage organization. This requires the preservation of the names of all relevant ancestors and ancestresses, but genealogical classification has no meaning except as a shorthand for the many and complex relations of individuals and groups.

The living members of a lineage are continually experiencing, in their

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

daily life, the antithesis between patrilateral and matrilateral ties in the joint family. There is also the principle of the continuity and identity of the lineage. Members of the same lineage are identified with one another and with their lineal ascendants. Tallensi think of a lineage as a continuous, even eternal, group, a unit persisting through time as well as existing at a given time. A particular lineage to-day is the same lineage that it was at its inception two, three, or *x* generations ago. Segments of a clan or maximal lineage have the same structural position relatively to one another as they had in the beginning, only on a different scale; and in the beginning segmentarily related lineages sprang from brothers. As these founding ancestors were related, so are their contemporary agnatic descendants related. Hence co-ordinate segments of a lineage are described as *sunzɔp* ('brothers by the same father'), and the bonds of brotherhood (*sunzɔt*) are the nucleus and prototype of the bonds between co-ordinate segments. Two co-ordinate segments whose founding ancestors were full (*soog*) brothers have closer ties than similar co-ordinate segments descended from a pair of half-brothers. The lineage is always growing, but can never break the unchanging frame laid down at its beginning. It is almost as if a single person has undergone a quantitative metamorphosis with the passage of generations.

Lineage ties cannot lapse or be renounced. A maximal lineage once established can never split into two or more independent (i.e. mutually exogamous) maximal lineages, as in some other areas of Africa, and territorial dispersion does not break the lineage tie, even after many generations. In fact, the whole stream of Tale social life emphasizes and reinforces the sense of lineage continuity, and of the identification of members of a lineage with one another, with their predecessors, and with their prospective successors. This is the basis of the corporate unity and solidarity of the lineage, and of the lineal transmission of rights and duties, ritual observances, office, property, and debts; and for this reason any member of a lineage can represent any other member, living or dead, or the whole lineage, in relation to other lineages of a like sort. This, too, underlies the usage by which members of a lineage can refer to their founding ancestor either as their 'father' (*ba*) or as their 'ancestor' (*yaab*), a term which denotes any patrilineal ancestor beyond and including the grandfather. It explains the conception of the lineage progenitrix—the founding ancestor's mother—as the 'mother' (*ma*) of the lineage. It must be added that even when a lineage is envisaged as a *dug* deriving from its progenitrix, it takes its name from her son, as its agnatic founding ancestor as a branch of a more inclusive lineage.

The rules of lineage segmentation can be summed up as follows: Whenever a lineage is envisaged as an inclusive corporate unit embracing two or more subordinate segments, it is identified by reference to its founding *ancestor*, as the starting-point of its descent. It is thought of as a *yir*, house, 'the children of one father (*ba yɛni biis*)', on the model of the patricentral joint family (*yir* in the primary sense) in which the offspring form a single genealogical and social unit with reference to their common father. Its focal ancestor shrine is designated the '*bɔyar* of the fathers (*banam bɔyar*)', a notion that stresses the dominance of the father-figure

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

Lineage Grouping and Local Grouping

613 621 596 We come now to the question of the connexion between lineage grouping and locality. A lineage like Nəpugzabər yiri, though its span is comparatively small, exhibits all the important principles of lineage structure and will suffice as a crucial example.

In all the old-established settlements we find a very close correlation between lineage proximity and residential proximity among the members of the clan who live there. Close agnates tend to live near one another, so that residential proximity is almost a measure of lineage proximity. A segment of small span tends to be a close residential cluster, and segments of larger span, up to the major segments of a maximal lineage, tend to form residential blocks.

We can see this most readily if we look again at the residential dispersion of a group of agnatically related joint families, bearing in mind that the men of a joint family form a lineage. For as the homestead is the material integument of the living structure of the joint family, so is the localization of the lineage, growing out of the spatial arrangement of the homestead, the spatial counterpart of the lineage structure.

592 602 596 As will be remembered (see p. 199), the elementary case is that of two full (*soog*) brothers, who often continue to occupy a single homestead long after they have set up separate families. Each will have more or less self-contained quarters, but the homestead will have only one gateway (*zanɔr*), one cattle-yard (*sapak*), and one room for the family head (*zɔŋ*), signifying that it is a single homestead. Half-brothers (*sunzɔp*) may share a homestead in this way, but they usually separate more distinctly when they have growing families. Each will have his own gateway, &c., and party walls divide his section of the homestead completely from those of his brothers, making it what may be called a semi-detached homestead. Such a set of semi-detached homesteads may house a man and his mature first-born son, or a man and his deceased brother's sons. Sometimes two or more ortho-cousins (brothers, in native terminology) live thus side by side.

613 621 More usually, however, men whose nearest common ancestor is a grandfather occupy completely separate dwellings, often very near to one another. Men whose nearest common ancestor is a great-grandfather never have permanent homes adjoining one another in this semi-detached way. These conditions of residence signalize successive stages of segmentation as the effective minimal lineage expands and splits into new effective minimal lineages. But what residential arrangements will prevail in a particular lineage segment depends, also, upon other circumstances, the most important of which are the economic and religious relations, and the character and disposition of the individuals concerned. Residential collocation is not a simple function of lineage relationship. There is a *tertium quid* linking them: the combined effect of land tenure, on which the whole economy of the household rests, and of the ancestor cult. For example, when a joint family splits, the man who leaves the ancestral home usually builds a homestead for himself on land belonging to the

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

sets apart the males as the nucleus of the lineage. We can see the centrifugal, sundering force of matrilateral kinship counterbalancing the centripetal, uniting pull of patriliny. In the context of family life we can see the play of conflict and compromise in the working out of the primary equilibrium of Tale social organization, due to the interaction of these two sectors of social life.

Through his primary relations of consanguinity in the domestic family the individual is linked to agnates in other families and to cognates in other families and clans. There is, however, one significant difference between intra-familial and extra-familial bonds of kinship. Unlike the latter, the former are necessarily ambivalent, each relationship containing within itself both an agnatic and a cognatic component. In a joint family of three generations, for example, a child's relationship with his father differs from his relationship with his grandfather or his mother. Though these are all cognatic relationships, the tension and latent rivalry in the relationship of father and son stand in marked contrast to the comradeship of grandfather and grandson. On the other hand, grandfather, father, and son belong to the same lineage segment; they are united by a common interest in patrimonial land and in the product of their joint labour, by a common ancestor cult, by rights and duties vested in that lineage in relation to like segments of a greater lineage, and by their common concern for the continuity of their line. These are part of the whole complex of common interests and values that mobilize corporate action and maintain corporate solidarity in the maximal lineage and clan of which they form a segment. The men of a joint family may be thrown into conflict with one another on account of their cognatic relationships, but they act in union and on behalf of one another and of the whole unit in virtue of their lineage ties.

There is another paradox in the structure of the Tale family that is of importance for our inquiry. Consanguineous relationships arise out of parenthood; but parenthood presupposes marriage, a union of a man and a woman who are, by definition, not kin. The bonds of kinship are rooted in a bond the very essence of which is the absence of kinship. Hence comes the ambivalence inherent in intra-familial cognatic relations. Hence comes, also, another category of social relations, both in the family and between members of different families and clans, relations of affinity. There are two axes, as it were, in the structure of the family, the axis of kinship and that of marriage.

Before we discuss kinship in the domestic family more fully, we must consider a few matters of more general import. For the constellation of ties and cleavages that makes up the focal field of kinship is conditioned by the formative principles and values that shape the greater society into which the domestic family fits and which it helps to knit together. All person-to-person relations in the family are biased by the values attached to patrilineal descent and maternal origin in the total social structure.

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

vanity apart, they do require ample storage-room for the large quantities of clothes, the saddlery and trappings of their horses, the innumerable odds and ends of European origin, and many articles of native production which they have accumulated by purchase or gift. Their good fortune is exceptional. Others content themselves with small and modest private rooms. Leatherworkers and blacksmiths also often have private rooms where they keep their tools and the materials of their craft.

No special provision is made for young children or girls. They live in their mothers' rooms. An unmarried young man usually has a special room of his own, essentially a sleeping-room (*doo*), in his mother's *dug*; and if there are several adolescent boys in a family a *doo* may be built for them in one of the women's *dugət*.

The construction of the dwelling-house shows graphically the division of the domestic family into two complementary spheres. On the one hand, we have the sphere in which the patricentral *yir* predominates; on the other, that in which the matricentral *dug* has priority. It is the line of cleavage between descent from the father (*ba dɔɣam*) and descent from the mother (*ma dɔɣam*), principles which are antithetical in form but complementary in function in the domestic organization. Maternal origin supplies the canon of differentiation within the family, paternal descent the principle of integration. In the polygynous joint family, which is the natives' ideal domestic unit, the constituent *dugət* are relatively autonomous in relation to one another, and in certain respects even mutually opposed. The *yir* combines them into a single integral unit, but they are not swallowed up; they retain their specific identity according to maternal origin. The *yir*, then, is the complementary factor to the *dug*; it is also the synthesis of a group of *dugət* at a higher level of organization. This, as has been shown in our previous book, is both the structural model and the social matrix of the lineage system.

The Developmental Cycle of the Joint Family

We have found it convenient to fix our analysis of the Tale homestead by reference to the simplest kind of independent domestic unit. But the elementary family, as we have already remarked, is neither the ideal nor the most common type of independent domestic unit in Taleland; for the typical substratum of a domestic group is not the individual breadwinner but an effective minimal lineage.[1] The domestic group grows, changes, and dissolves with the growth cycle of this lineage, and a particular elementary family is only an episode in this cycle. The structure of the Tale family cannot be divorced from its existence in time. We have to examine it as a process. At any given time we find domestic families at every stage of development in a Tale community.

[1] Cf. p. 9 above for a definition of this unit. A full analysis of its constitution is given in *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

596 The characteristic domestic family of the Tallensi is the agnatic joint family, and other forms of domestic group appear as phases in the growth cycle of a joint family. In a random sample of sixty-one domestic families from Tongo and the settlements adjacent to it, recorded in 1934, forty-one, or about two-thirds of these, were joint families.[1] A joint family consists of two or more close agnates, members of a single effective minimal lineage in all but exceptional cases, and often comprising all the members of a particular effective minimal lineage, together with their wives, children, and other dependants, if any,

[1] This sample of 61 domestic families which is cited throughout this chapter, includes domestic families from 5 clans, but the majority are from Tongo. A similar sample taken in the Sie district gave approximately the same results. As has been mentioned, about two-thirds of these families were joint families. The remainder were either elementary families (i.e. consisting of a man, his wife or wives, and his young children) which had been parts of joint families 5 or 10 years previously and would probably become joint families again in a decade or so; or they were joint families augmented by one or two close agnates of the family head and their dependants, or by other kinsmen. Such an augmented joint family functions in the same way as a joint family in the narrow sense. Thus if the time factor is taken into account all Tale domestic families can be described as joint families.

The composition of the joint family can be regarded from a slightly different angle, which supplements what has just been said. Considering the family from the point of view of the relationship of the head to the other male members, our sample breaks up as follows:

11 elementary families (1 man, wife or wives, occasionally his mother, and his young children).
22 families in which the head was the father of the other adult male(s).
25 families in which the head was the older brother of one or more of the other adult males.
3 families in which the head was the grandfather of one or all the other adult males.

The commonest type, it will be seen, is the joint family presided over by either a 'father' or the senior amongst a group of brothers.

[162] The mean number of persons (men, women, and children) per domestic family of our sample is 10·4, distributed as follows:

Number of persons per family

	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–5	Total
Frequency	8	28	17	4	4	61

The mean number of adult males (i.e. over 18, approximately) per family is 2·6; of wives, including widows of deceased members, 3·4; of minors, including adolescent daughters, 4·4. The frequency distributions are as follows:

Number per family

Frequency of	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Adult males .	0	10	25	13	7	4	0	2	..	..	..	..	..	61
Wives . .	0	6	16	14	13	4	3	3	0	2	..	..	..	61
Minors . .	2	4	11	9	11	8	4	4	1	3	2	1	1	61

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

occupying a single homestead. All the men of a joint family are therefore related to one another through a common father or grandfather or, infrequently, great-grandfather. A joint family may consist of two or more brothers (full or half-brothers or paternal cousins), with their wives and children, and perhaps an old mother; or a man and some or all of his married sons with their wives and children, together with unmarried sons and other dependants; or an old man, some or all of his married sons and grandsons, with their wives and children and other dependants —'sons' and 'grandsons' in the last two classes being understood in the native classificatory sense as including both own and deceased brothers' sons and grandsons. Joint families of the last-mentioned class are not very common. Here and there one meets a joint family combining features of two classes or having a rather wider range of agnates or other male kin; but these are unusual.

A joint family is obviously a composite unit. If the subordinate families constituting it are taken separately, some or all may be monogynous, elementary families; but one or more of the male members may have more than one wife, and there will thus be subordinate polygynous families within the joint family. For though a Talən starts his career as a family man with only one wife, his aim and ideal, throughout his life, is to have as many wives as he can afford. Actually, judging by the previously quoted sample,[1] the incidence of polygyny among the

[1] The following table sets out the relevant figures:

Table showing the Distribution of Wives of 146 Men over 18 Years of Age, belonging to 61 Domestic Families

Estimated age of men	Married men: Number of wives 1	2	3	4	5	Total men	Single men: Unmarried	Widowers or deserted
18–30	32	3	..	..	..	35	18 (most under 30)	17 (most over 30)
31–45	21	13	3	2	..	39		
46 and over	14	14	3	5	1	37		
Totals	67	30	6	7	1	111	18	17
							35	

Percentages	1	2	3	4	5	Total 146 men: 76% married	24% single
Of whole sample	46	20·5	4·1	4·8	0·7		
Of married men	60·4	27	5·4	6·3	0·9		

The table shows the distribution of effective wives, i.e. wives who fulfil both the sexual and the economic duties due from a wife, or, in a few cases, at least the economic duties. There were 9 non-effective wives, in addition, in this group: 3 incapacitated by leprosy or other chronic disease; 1 senile; 3 elderly women nominally inherited by their late husbands' younger brothers but

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596 Tallensi is only about 40 per 100 married men and two out of three
595 polygynists have only two wives. The modal number of wives is one.

Moreover, plurality of wives is mainly the privilege of older men, because they have both more resources and a longer marital history than the young men. Three-quarters of the married men under 45 have only one wife each.

596 A joint family is an organized economic and jural unit forming a single household under the authority of the oldest by age or generation of the group of agnates upon which it is based. Its component families are its segments, ordered and articulated in conformity with the lineage relations binding this group of men to one another. This appears in the layout of the homestead. The head of the joint family is the hub of the whole house, as we have seen, and each wife has her own quarters. It is shown, for example, in the fact that a young married son with no children, or only one or two infant children, generally occupies one of the rooms in his mother's *dug*, or, if his mother is dead, in the senior *dugdaana*'s *dug*; for his conjugal family counts, as yet, only as a segment of this *dug* in the social and economic organization of the house.

Taken over a long enough period, the joint family is seen to be a transitory unit. As the younger male members grow up, marry, and have children of their own, inner tensions begin to assert themselves and a tendency to split up appears. If fission does not occur in the lifetime of the head of the joint family, it is almost invariably precipitated by his death. Some or all of the component families then set up in their own independent homesteads, though it may be some years before complete dispersion supervenes. Thus it happens that an elementary family, which was at one time a part of a joint family, comes to occupy its own

162 residing with grown-up sons; 2 inherited wives who had not yet joined the menage of their new husbands and were unlikely to do so for a considerable time, if at all. Seven of these non-effective wives were the wives of men in the 46 *plus* group. If these are reckoned as well, the distribution is altered somewhat in favour of the polygynists. There would then, for instance, be 3 men with 5 wives each.

In addition to the 111 married men, this sample of domestic families includes 35 single men, 18 of whom, mostly young men, had never been properly married, and 17 of whom were single at the time of the census, owing to the death or desertion of their wives.

Estimates of age given here and elsewhere in this book are very approximate. The difficulties of guessing the age of Africans in societies where chronological age is taken no notice of are well known. In making the above estimates I took the Tong Hills Expedition of 1911 as a base-line. From what I was told of the appearance, size, and activities of a person at the time of that well-remembered event, a guess could be made at his or her probable age in 1934. If one person's approximate age was established in this way, others who were agreed to be his or her contemporaries could be put into the same age-group. For example, the age-group 18–30 includes a number of men who said they were babes in arms in 1911, and the age-group 46 *plus* includes all those who were young married men in 1911.

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

homestead accompanied often by the family head's old mother. This is the usual history of the independent elementary family in Taleland; and about 1 in 8 of the domestic families of our sample have this constitution. Often, however, when a man secedes from the joint family he already has more than one wife, though his children are all still under marriageable age. Polygynous domestic families of this class occur in about the same proportion—1 in 8—in the sample. And thus the cycle begins again. As the children grow up and marry, each fraction of the dismembered joint family evolves into a new joint family, or at least has the possibility of doing so.

A joint family splits up—into family segments, be it noted, not into a number of dispersed individuals—if it has existed long enough to have reached an advanced stage of internal differentiation; but during its existence it is a remarkably cohesive unit. The fissiparous tendencies inherent in its structure are kept well in check until the pressure of economic needs, psychological friction, or a radical alteration in the constellation of the social relations, such as occurs when the family head dies, makes them irresistible. The split follows the lines of cleavage inherent in the structure of the effective minimal lineage on which a particular joint family is founded, and it takes place by stages.

We shall study the process of fission in the joint family later. Here only the results concern us. The simplest split occurs when the oldest son of the family head 'goes out on his own (*yi u kɔkɔ*)',[1] or 'cuts his own gateway (*bit u zanzɔr*)' in the family homestead, during his father's lifetime. He thus sets up an independent household, though perhaps living in a semi-detached part of the paternal homestead. But when the old man dies, he frequently returns to the parental home, and the joint family is reconstituted under his authority.

Permanent fission usually occurs between brothers (full, or half-brothers, or paternal cousins), or by the secession of the family head's deceased brother's sons. It begins, and may persist until the family head's death, as a purely economic division. Thus two full (*soog*) brothers—the older being the family head—may decide to farm independently because the growing economic wants of their respective families no longer permit them to maintain a common household. The bond of full brotherhood (*soog*) inhibits further fission altogether, or until such time as both men have adult children. Until then they generally continue to occupy the same homestead, using a single common gateway, cattle-yard (*sapak*), and *zɔŋ*. Their respective sections of the

[1] The intra-family tensions which lead to the 'going out' of the eldest son will be discussed later. They are rationalized, and the secession of the eldest son is given a mystical sanction by the taboo which, among the Namoos, forbids a man ever meeting his first-born adult son face to face in his gateway after the latter has a family of adolescent children. Non-Namoos do not have the taboo, but the beliefs expressed in it are as strong among them as among the Namoos. Cf. below, Ch. VIII.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

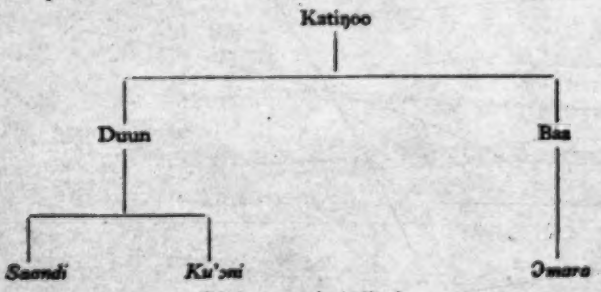
596

homestead, called their *dugɔt* by contraposition with the common *yir*, will be separated by a party wall with a ladder on either side, giving access for essential communication without a detour via the *sapak* but preventing trespass by their respective families. Each man is the head of his own, relatively independent, household, working its particular fields and having its own granary; but the older brother has authority over the whole *yir* in jural and ritual matters, exercises general supervision over the affairs of all its members, and, above all, controls the utilization of the patrimonial land and cattle and is the titular owner of all heritable, non-personal property of all its members. Pumaan and Zaŋ are full brothers sharing a house in this manner.

Two half-brothers, or two first cousins (*sunzɔp*-brothers) whose fathers were full brothers (*saarɔt*) sometimes share a homestead thus, if they get on cordially, especially while the children of both or either are still too young for productive labour. Thus Naabdiya and Barimoda are half-brothers who occupy a single homestead with one gateway in this manner.

In time, however, the combined effects of economic needs, structural cleavages, and personal tensions lead to a further stage of separation. It takes longest, as we have noted, with full brothers whose genealogical equivalence,[1] mutual identification, and reciprocal affection are greatest, and occurs most readily with cousins, between whom the corresponding cleavages are more explicit. The younger man cuts another gateway for himself (*bit u zanɔr*), and henceforth has his own *zɔŋ* and *sapak*. The homestead now really consists of two separate, semi-detached dwellings, each occupied by one domestic family and household.

An example of this is Katiŋoo yiri at Zoo. This homestead is occupied by the three grandsons—Saandi, Ku'ɔni, and Ɔmara—of Katiŋoo, who died about a generation ago. Each of these men, who are all over 45, is the head of a joint family with grown-up children. Their lineage relationship is as follows:



(Living men in italics.)

[1] Cf. Ch. X below.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

This house illustrates an advanced stage of segmentation, involving a split between two full brothers (*saarət*) on the one hand, and between paternal cousins (*sunzɔp*) on the other. The three domestic families occupy three separate sections of the common *yɨr*, divided from one another by walls of the same height as the outer walls of the homestead, each with its own gateway, *zɔŋ*, and *sapak*, and communicating internally by means of ladders. They are described as the component *dugət* of the common *yɨr*. Saandi, the oldest of the three 'brothers' (*sunzɔp*), and head of the lineage of Katiŋoo biis, occupies the central section. Economically the three domestic families are wholly independent of one another, but Saandi exercises a certain degree of jural and ritual authority over the whole *yɨr*. As its spatial configuration implies, such a unit has less domestic solidarity than, for example, that of Pumaan and Zaŋ

Finally comes the stage of complete spatial segregation of the domestic families derived from segments of a single joint family. This occurs often between the families of half-brothers, and invariably, in due course, between the families of cousins. Thus Kurug and Lɛbhtiis of Təŋ-Puhug occupy separate homesteads, 100 yards or so apart, with their respective domestic families.[1] These homesteads were built by their fathers, Yin and Naandɔmɔ́r, who were half-brothers and decided to separate after the death of *their* father, Zupibig. It may happen also in a family like Naabdiya's, when the head of the homestead dies and is succeeded by his younger brother or half-brother. Then his oldest son, if he is a man of mature years with a growing family, may in due course move out to set up on his own with his family and younger siblings.

In this way a joint family evolves into an *expanded* family in the course of a generation or so. An *expanded* family generally forms a close local group. The heads of the several joint families comprising it are all members of one lineage segment of a low order, expanded from what was an effective minimal segment one or two generations before. They have intimate social and personal ties and their families, *pari passu*, have closer intercourse with one another and stronger mutual loyalties than any of them has with other neighbouring families. They retain, in an attenuated degree, many of the intimacies and conventions that normally prevail in the joint family. Their relations to one another are analogous to those of the *dugət* of a joint family, but the lineage of the family heads operates more formally as the basis of their cohesion than in the case of a group of families sharing a common residence. When such a group of domestic families is described collectively as a *yɨr* and severally as *dugət*, these terms refer to the lineage relationship of their male members. For there is no specific term for the expanded family, nor has it a precise social definition. It exists in the conduct of its

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 193.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

596

members to one another, not as a demarcated social unit. It is the widest field of domestic relations for any joint family.

It is evident that the domestic families that make up a settlement at any given time exhibit various degrees of internal differentiation. It depends mainly on the length of time the particular domestic family has been in existence. At one extreme we find families like that of Baripɛta, a man of about 35, who in 1934 had one wife and one infant. With him lived also one of his late father's widows and his young unmarried full brother. We might describe this as a young family. It constitutes a single economic and jural unit.

At the other extreme is the family of a man like Yinyɛla, whose age in 1934 could not have been less than 75. His household comprised his adult sons (all of them married or old enough to have wives, and the oldest a man of about 40 with adolescent children), his three young children, varying in age from about 11 to 2 years, and his deceased brother's son with his wife and children. He had had many wives, three of whom were still surviving, two elderly women and one a young woman whom he had married six or seven years before. This joint family had reached such an advanced stage of internal differentiation that the competing interests of its component families (the family segments) were becoming difficult to keep in check. The common resources of the household did not satisfy all the wants of Yinyɛla's brother's son's and his own eldest son's families; and these two men began to cultivate supplementary farms for their own use. Yinyɛla's domestic family was, in fact, on the verge of breaking up, though it was still an economic and jural unit under his authority. Had he not died in 1937 his brother's son would have moved out and his eldest son would have 'cut his own gateway (*bit u zaŋɔr*)'. In between these extremes are families like that of Nayabil of Kpata'ar, representing a stage of development to which a simple family like Baripɛta's may attain in a decade or so. Nayabil has four wives. His children range in age from about 17 to infancy. His mother and younger full-brother (*pit-soog*) with his wife and child live with him. In twenty years, if all survive, this family will resemble that of Yinyɛla in 1934.

Broadly speaking, families of the first and third kinds are those of men under middle age, who have but little voice in the jural and ceremonial affairs of the community, and families of the second kind are those of the elders (*kpeem*, pl. *kpem*) and near-elders (*kpeemtaɣalis*), men past middle age, who have the dominant role in controlling and organizing social life. About half the domestic families in a settlement belong to each of these two broad divisions. In the highly differentiated joint families which have been in existence for a considerable time, the age range of the *yirdaana*'s children and grandchildren often runs from middle age to infancy. For a man goes on taking new wives, if he can, as long as his reproductive powers last. Old men are notoriously

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

desirous of having, and are indulgent to, a young wife (*pɔɣabil*), not only for sexual motives but also, and mainly, in order to have a strong young woman about the house to administer those creature comforts to which they are said to become more and more addicted as they grow older. Thus siblings by the same father (*ba ukɔla biis*) may differ in age by as much as a generation. A man's younger half-brother or sister may be younger than his own children though senior to them in generation. This has important effects on the lineage organization.

The custom of the levirate introduces a component of some significance in the constitution of the joint family. In the 61 domestic families of our sample there were 111 married men, and no less than 21—more than one in five—had one or more inherited wives. An inherited wife usually brings her young children by her first husband (if she has any) with her. They grow up side by side with her children by her second husband, who is responsible for their support. Tale kinship ideas make this a simple and self-evident arrangement; but it means, nevertheless, a division within what is normally the most compact and cohesive element of the domestic family, the matricentral *dug*, in accordance with the different paternity of the children. Generally a widow of child-bearing age marries a close agnate of her deceased husband—his brother or first cousin—who is, therefore, a close classificatory father of her children. This makes it easy for them to regard her second husband with some of the devotion and affection due from children to their own father, especially if they are still very young. Still, this is a weak place in the cohesion of a family, at which a split easily occurs; for no man, say the Tallensi, can wholly take the place of one's true father. If a widow marries a distant agnate of her late husband, the latter's heir may demand the custody of his children when they are old enough to do without a mother's care. This splits the *dug*. But it also creates compensatory bonds of uterine (*soog*) kinship between her sons belonging to different lineage segments.

Sometimes a man's dependants include a deceased brother's children whose mother has died or married out of the family. Such children are, for all practical purposes, his own children, but the sons frequently secede when they have children. Much less commonly, a man may have an orphaned sister's son (*ahɔŋ*) living with him in as intimate a relationship, ostensibly, as if he were his son or brother. Actually, both jural and sentimental reservations hedge round a sister's son's position in the family, for his descent bars him, in the last resort, from ever acquiring real filial status.[1] It is significant that in the old settlements extremely few cases of this kind occur, and it is always assumed that the nephew will eventually return to his natal settlement—though he does not always do so. In the new settlements, where personal kinship ties largely replace lineage ties as the basis of local aggregation, not only sororal

[1] Cf. Ch. XI below.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

nephews but more distant cognatic and even affinal kin frequently live with a kinsman until they can set up in their own homesteads.

Sometimes, too, an unmarried sister's child (*tau-bii*) may grow up and live in its uncle's family. It may be an illegitimate child (*yi yeem bii*—a maiden's child), or one whose mother's bride-price was not paid, and who therefore belongs to her father unless or until it is redeemed (*pɔhəg*) by the payment of a cow by its genitor or his heir. A sister's child is to all intents and purposes a child of the family. But not being of the true agnatic line, it is subject to certain jural disabilities which have no consequence for a girl but handicap a boy, as we have previously seen.

The domestic families of chiefs and headmen are unusual only in respect of size. Their newly won riches enable chiefs and headmen to acquire numerous wives and to maintain households that appear enormous in the eyes of the ordinary man. A petty headman may have ten or more wives. The late Chief of Tongo, a chief of modest means compared with some of his peers in Taleland, had more than thirty. The Golibdaana of Tenzugu has at least eighty. The Chief of Datoko is reputed to have a hundred, but he denies this and claims to have only a modest fifty. Except that their domestic economy and organization is more complex and that there is at times more friction between the womenfolk, these hypertrophied joint families have the same pattern of organization as those of ordinary folk.

It is noteworthy that this pattern has not been disturbed by the social changes which have, in recent years, followed the subjection of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast to European political, economic, and cultural influences. Family disorganization has barely begun to appear in Taleland. There is hardly a domestic family in the country—not one in our sample—which has wholly escaped the effects of these contact influences. One or more of their members is or has been abroad in Mampurugu, Ashanti, or the Colony, for longer or shorter periods of time, farming, working for wages, or trading. But the number of men abroad, at any given time, for very long periods is relatively small[1] compared with other parts of West and Southern Africa, and their absence has little effect on the structure of the residual family. Their labour is lost to the family, but as they are no longer a drain on its resources this does not upset its internal economy. Similarly, as they are mostly young men[2] with little or no responsibility for the management of family

[1] Estimates based on my own census material and on Nominal Rolls drawn up by Administrative Officers for tax collection show that an average of just under 7 per cent. of the adult male population of Taleland were away from home and not likely to return in the immediate future, in the years 1936 to 1939. This estimate may be compared with the 60–80 per cent. of able-bodied adult males absent from tribal reserves in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland quoted by Lord Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 701.

[2] Reliable information on the ages of these absentees cannot be obtained. But from personal contact with many of them, both on their return home and

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

affairs, their absence does not disturb jural or ritual relations centred in the family. It is like a tree which remains a tree morphologically and physiologically even if some of its minor branches have been lopped off.

The foregoing is true of the great majority of Tale families. The structure of the normal family can still be accurately described without reference to contact influence, in spite of the fact that a few families can be found in every settlement which have been badly mutilated by the prolonged absence abroad of their male members. Admittedly the norms of family relations have not remained completely insulated from these influences. With the ease of modern communications and the openings for work abroad, young people have incentives and opportunities which their fathers never had for resisting the authority of their elders and for breaking away from the family for a longer or shorter time. But as yet these new incentives and opportunities appear only as modifying factors in the play of the culturally defined family relations. They do not represent a conflicting set of norms, creating divisions within Tale society. For instance, a young man who is still jurally a minor cannot at will leave the domestic family to which he belongs by birth and set up an independent household. He can do so only in compliance with the moral rules and social conventions that regulate the fission of families. In fact, the motive to break away will only arise when certain standard changes take place in the composition of the domestic unit to which he belongs, or when he reaches a stage of social maturity which precipitates certain standard tensions between him and the head of the unit. The alternative for a young man who, in these days, hankers after independence is to leave the community until such time as he is prepared to settle down. He has to seek work abroad, in Ashanti or the Colony, or in the service of the white man nearer home. He is assured of a cordial welcome home whenever he decides to return, whether it be for a few weeks only or permanently. But if he makes up his mind to settle down at home it can only be within the existing social framework, and this means complying with the norms of family organization. There is no other way by which he can get married or acquire a house site or farm-land in his natal settlement, let alone play his part in community affairs. Hitherto these norms have been so well maintained that no returned emigrant has been known to flout them.

Summing up, we see that the Tale domestic system has three morphological strata. It consists of a segmentary economic formation—households of different dimensions and degrees of economic self-sufficiency—embraced within a segmentary jural and ceremonial formation—domestic units not necessarily congruent with households grouped under family heads—and this again contained within a system of residential grouping in which the changes of phase in domestic structure are crystallized.

in places like Kumasi, I can say with certainty that the great majority are under 30.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

592 A domestic unit is most clearly identified by the fact that it has a single common gateway. Though the three domains of domestic organization are not absolutely congruent, the commonest residential unit is the single household, which is also a single though not necessarily completely independent jural and ceremonial unit.[1]

• 596 We have been considering the typical development of the joint family as a process of successive fission and dispersion. But the contrary process of reintegration also plays an important part in this development. The changes in the composition of the joint or expanded family that lead to changes in the status and social roles of its senior male members cause it to split up in the circumstances that have been indicated, but they lead to a fusion of independent units in other circumstances. The decisive factors are jural status in the lineage, with which go rights over patrimonial land, and economic capacity.

Let us take a sample case. When Katiŋoo died (see genealogy, p. 68) his eldest son Duun became head of the effective minimal lineage and joint family and inherited the patrimonial farm-land. Duun and his full brother Baa continued to occupy their father's homestead, using only one gateway. After a while—four or five years, perhaps—Baa asked to be allowed to farm for himself as his children were growing up. He still occupied the same homestead as Duun, but his quarters were separated from those of Duun by a high party wall (*beŋar*), he had his own granary, farmed for himself, and was solely responsible for supplying the food and other wants of his wives and children. The domestic family now consisted of two households.

[1] The following table shows this clearly:

162 *Table showing the Distribution of Domestic Families (= Gateways) and Households (= Units of Food Economy) in relation to Homesteads*

Domestic families per homestead	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	*Totals*
No. of homesteads	34	5	4	0	1	0	0	0	44
No. of domestic families	34	10	12	0	5	0	0	0	61
Households per homestead	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	***Totals***
No. of homesteads	25	11	4	2	0	1	0	1	44
No. of households	25	22	12	8	0	6	0	8	81

(Mean number of persons: per homestead, 14·5; per domestic family, 10·4.)

The 61 domestic families of our sample occupy 44 homesteads. On the average there are 1·4 gateways (i.e. 1·4 domestic families) per homestead; but more than half of the 61 families occupy their own homesteads, with one gateway apiece. There are 81 households in the sample group, an average of 1·9 households per homestead and 1·3 households per domestic family. But nearly a third of these households are single domestic families dwelling in their own homesteads.

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FE11 Tallensi FE11

Five or six years passed and Duun died. Baa was now head of the lineage and family. The patrimonial land passed to him. For a short time Duun's two sons, Saandi and Ku'ɔni, continued to occupy their late father's section of the homestead and farmed in partnership, independently of Baa. But they soon decided to move out. They went to build at Gbambee, on their late father's bush farm. At first they shared a homestead and farmed together. Then Ku'ɔni began to farm for himself and, a little later, wished to have his own gateway. At this stage the expanded family sprung from Katiŋoo consisted of two homesteads, one at Zoo, occupied by Baa and his sons with their families, who together made up a single household, and the other at Gbambee, consisting of two semi-detached parts occupied by Saandi and Ku'ɔni respectively, with their families, and constituting two separate households.

A little later Ku'ɔni separated altogether from Saandi and went to build his homestead at Zoo on a piece of land that had been their father's personal farm. This site proved to be mystically unpropitious and soon Ku'ɔni moved again. This time he returned to his father's (and grandfather's) original home (*daboog*) and built semi-detached quarters for himself adjoining Katiŋoo's old homestead, still occupied by Baa. He remained economically independent of Baa; but both he and Saandi were still under Baa's jural and ritual jurisdiction, as his brother's sons. A process of partial reintegration had, however, occurred.

Then Baa died and Saandi became head of the lineage and heir to the patrimonial land. So he moved back to Zoo, where he built semi-detached quarters for himself adjoining the group's original home. This happened quite recently; and the distribution of Katiŋoo yir is as we have described on p. 69. Saandi, Ku'ɔni, and Baa's son Ɔmara have each their separate, semi-detached quarters and their separate gateways; they are economically independent of each other; but jural and ritual jurisdiction over the unit is in Saandi's hands.

But this is not the end of the story. If Saandi were to die suddenly, none of his sons would be old enough to farm for himself and support Saandi's widows and children. So they would all join Ku'ɔni's household, and remain in his custody—the widows as his wives (unless they remarried other men, when they would fade out of the picture altogether), the children as his children—until Saandi's oldest boy was old enough to set up an independent household. The process of gradual dispersion would then start again. If, Saandi being dead, Ɔmara were also to die suddenly, leaving no son old enough to support his household, his children would also join Ku'ɔni, and thus all the branches of Katiŋoo's family would be reconstituted into a single unit for the time being. The whole cycle would take from twenty to thirty years.

Our illustration has been in part hypothetical so as not to confuse the reader with too many genealogies. But this is not a fanciful case. A dozen family histories that have followed the pattern outlined above

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

●596

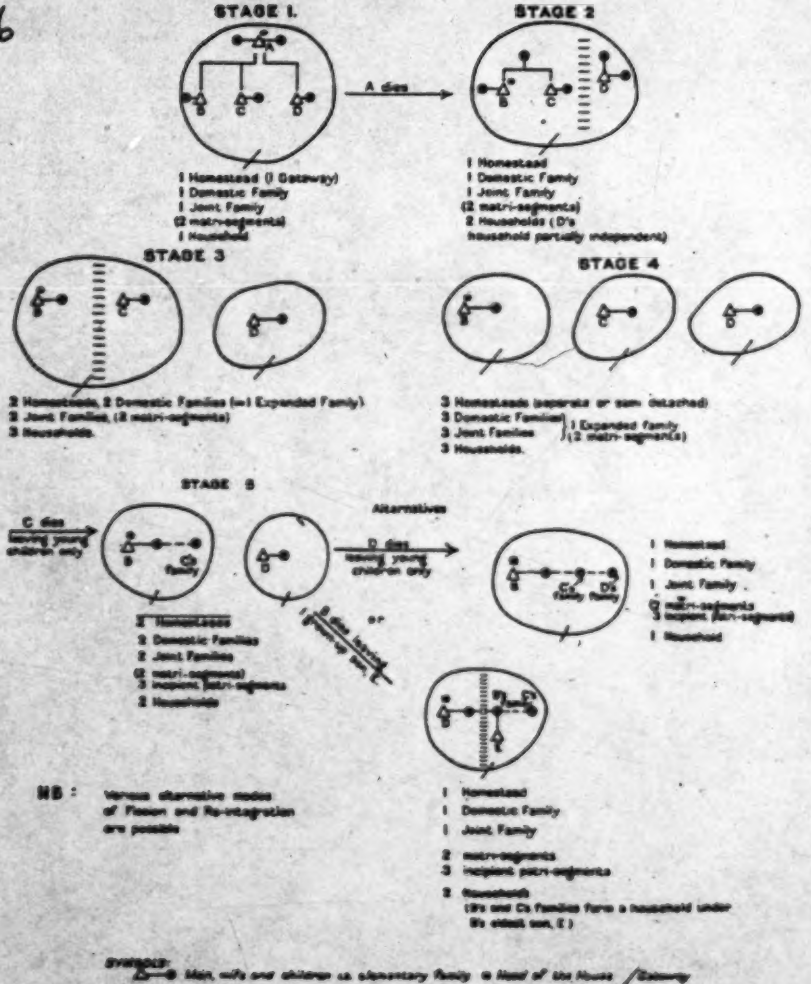

FIG. 3. Diagram showing the developmental cycle of the Joint Family.

[p. 76]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

396 could be cited. Such a history explains why Tiezien of Kpata'ar, for instance, has the sons of two of his late brothers living and working with him; and why Yinworəb of Təŋ-Kuorəg has both a brother's widows and young children, and his own young half-brothers, as members of his household.

We shall consider the main factors that determine this cycle of development in a later chapter. We shall see that economic needs and structural cleavages are chiefly responsible for fission in the joint family and religious and jural sanctions for the reintegration of an expanded family.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

people are absolutely alike. Peculiarities of personality and character, they say (and observation bears them out), qualify all social relationships. People conform to the norms but each in the light of his own experiences, his special circumstances, his personal idiosyncrasies. The same sort of events, the same kind of person-to-person relations, make up the life of every family; but they are combined in a unique way in the history of a particular family. They give a distinctive tone or atmosphere to the life of that family that can be more easily felt than described. I knew intimately six domestic families which I kept under observation for many months; I knew another dozen or so families fairly well, and spent many hours in yet other homes all over Taleland. I learnt to perceive, but I could never get below the surface of this affective ambient of family life. It is, indeed, difficult to find terms with which to convey the impression of smooth, equable, well-balanced running which a family like that of Ɔmara's makes on an observer, or the contrary impression of strain, or of inadequate co-ordination, which one sees in families like those of Kutɔbis of Tɔŋ-Dekpieng, or of Pumaan of Tɔŋ-Puhug.

Most Tale families seem to go on in a stable and harmonious way; but there are, as we shall see, very many possibilities of friction, some inevitable, some avoidable, which arise out of the cleavages inherent in the structure of the family. How long these forces of dissension remain dormant, or how they are handled when they thrust forward, depends very much on the character of the family head. A tactful and considerate family head like Ɔmara manages to keep a smooth discipline in his family and to maintain amicable relations with his neighbours, whereas an erratic man like Kutɔbis cannot keep his sons in check and is for ever at loggerheads with his nearest agnates. From the point of view of the structurally significant norms, this feature of Tale family life and of Tale kinship in general is important as underlying the elasticity of actual social behaviour within the limits of the norms, and as a dynamic factor in the cycle of changes that a family passes through.

One thing which puts a screen between an inquirer and the inner life of a family is the surprising degree of privacy a family can preserve. It is surprising in the circumstances of Tale social life. One's neighbours are one's nearest lineage kin. The lineage principle compels a man to consult and gain the support of these kin in any matter of importance, and he generally does so in trivial matters too. Men of the same lineage grow up together, play together in childhood, often work together as youths or men, constantly visit one another's homes, identify themselves with one another and act together in corporate affairs. Inevitably they know one another's personal history in detail. And this knowledge is not the mere stuff of gossip, but a real force in the corporate life of the lineage and the community, since the biography of the individual is a thread in the current history of the lineage, tying up with its common

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

Within the joint family, though its members maintain a very intimate association with one another, make free of one anothers' possessions, and go freely in and out of every woman's quarters, each woman and her children are ensured a certain amount of privacy in their own *dug*. Husband and wife form a precisely distinguished unit. They have complete privacy in their sexual relations and a great deal of privacy in other relations. It would be the grossest breach of manners for anyone but their own infant child to intrude on a man and his wife in their own sleeping-room.

In their own home, therefore, a family has much privacy. A man can confide in his wife or his son things that he does not want others to know about—things about his debts, his property, or his ritual possessions. He can talk over with them problems concerning the household or matters of public import. There are ritual activities, such as sacrifices to a medicine shrine, in which only a man and his sons or the members of the joint family share. Sometimes such domestic secrets have to be divulged, especially after a man's death. It may be necessary to clear up a question of a debt he owed or to carry out special rites for one of his medicine shrines. But until then they are usually faithfully guarded. The Talaŋa can keep his own counsel if need be.

The Significance of Marriage[1]

As the preceding chapters suggest, Tale domestic relations do not remain perpetually fixed. They change and develop with the years. At one time the ties of economic co-operation, of reciprocal sentiment and mutual loyalties, of reciprocal and shared rights and duties, are uppermost; at another the underlying cleavages and competing interests push through. This appears very clearly in the relations of husband and wife, the central pillar of the domestic organization. We shall discuss the marital relationship in some detail, for it is a nodal relationship in Tale social life. It is not only the starting-point of the family, but the starting-point of the kinship ties that run across and between genealogically independent clans and lineages. Through marriage the mutually exclusive corporate units of Tale society become interlaced with one another.

The Tallensi regard marriage as the normal state of life for every adult. They cannot conceive of anyone voluntarily refraining from marriage throughout life. There is something wrong, by native standards, with men and women who never marry; and they are few. In the whole of Tongo I knew only five men who had never been married and who would, according to common belief, never marry. One was obviously mentally defective; another was an invert; two were said to be so ugly that no woman would accept them, but both were also definitely unbalanced and eccentric; and the last was a gentle old man, who, it was

[1] A preliminary account of Tale marriage customs is given in my pamphlet, *Marriage Law among the Tallensi*, Government Press, Gold Coast, 1935.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

than the others, all the women must be allocated more or less equal plots for this purpose. Each woman, with the help of her daughters or a daughter-in-law, collects and stores wild herbs and edible leaves, buys condiments and seasonings like salt, pepper, and locust bean balls, sometimes with the proceeds of her own petty trading in the markets, and collects shea nuts for the preparation of shea butter, the most important source of fat and the most prized emollient in the native cuisine, for the use of her own *dug*. If a man gives a penny or twopence to one wife for the purchase of seasonings, he must, either immediately or on subsequent market days, give some money to his other wives for this purpose. If he obtains some meat, he must either distribute it amongst all his wives or give all of it to his senior wife to use or preserve for the benefit of the whole family. Only a wife in childbed is entitled to have extra luxuries, which it is the duty of her husband to provide.

Though each woman cooks for herself with an eye to the feeding of her own children and her husband, in the first place, co-wives are obliged to share food prepared with grain from the common supply. In times of plenty, if all the wives of a man have cooked a meal, each woman dishes out a portion of porridge and the accompanying relish for her husband, a portion for herself and her child or children eating with her, and a smaller portion for each of her co-wives. The husband should taste all the dishes sent in to him by his wives, and should pass on to the older children who do not eat with their mothers the dishes he does not want for himself. In times of scarcity a man's wives may cook in rotation for the whole family. But if a woman has a private supply of grain, obtained by trade or from her own relatives, she is entitled to use it for feeding her own children and the husband only; she need not give anything to her co-wives or their children.

In the production and utilization of food-supplies, as this brief sketch shows, the common interests of the *yir* are distinctly paramount. Co-wives co-operate most harmoniously, both among themselves and with the other women of the household, in this sphere of family life. In the organization of productive labour and of the domestic economy, and in the conventions regulating mutual help in this sphere, the dependence on one another of all the members of a household for their sustenance is constantly emphasized. But the relative autonomy of the *dug* is never wholly submerged. The women do not pool the products of their individual labour and enterprise. They do not pool their utensils, and family quarrels sometimes arise because one woman or one woman's child has borrowed and damaged a utensil belonging to another. They keep their firewood supplies, the accumulation of which is one of their most arduous tasks, jealously separate; and they do the same with vegetables and seasonings. There is sometimes friction between co-wives over the use of the grinding-room. But it is significant of the balance usually maintained between the centrifugal tendencies of the *dug* and the

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

596 centripetal pull of the *yir* in the economic sphere that the habit of co-operation and mutual help between the women of the household goes deeper as a rule than their inclination to think of their own *dugət* first. Thus there is a great deal of voluntary mutual aid between the women of the household. The things a woman owns she guards jealously; but she will often lend gladly to another woman of the household on the basis of the true reciprocity that prevails in family affairs. A woman who has prepared a new supply of shea butter, for instance, usually gives some to each of the other women of the household, knowing that some day she will receive gifts of a similar kind from them.

596 854 855 It is in the children of a family that the balance between *dug* and *yir* is most precisely embodied. They represent both the differentiation of *dug* from *dug* and the synthesis of all the *dugət* in the *yir*, in their most significant aspects. Thus, all the children of a man are formally the children of all his wives, and this might include the children of his brothers too. The women of a family, and especially co-wives, usually help one another a great deal in caring for one another's children. This commences with child-birth. As we have seen, the care of a parturient woman falls largely on her co-wives and other women of the same family. A new-born child is not given the breast at once by its mother but by another nursing mother; and a nursing co-wife would be the first person to be called upon. Later, the infant will often be left in the care of a co-wife for an hour or two or a whole day at a time if its mother has to be away from home. If a woman dies leaving young children, they are reared by her co-wives as a rule. When a girl becomes pregnant for the [293] first time, it is one of her mother's co-wives who has the honour and duty of ceremonially girding her with the matron's perineal band. Co-wives often take pride in and show great devotion to one another's children. This is especially true of a senior wife past the age of child-bearing. Such a woman, identifying herself closely with the husband and being herself no longer engrossed in her own young children, mothers the children of her younger co-wives with zealous devotion.

593 736 And yet, as the natives constantly repeat, the relation of mother and child is unique. Its mother's co-wife can never be the same to the child as its own mother. A woman cannot have the same feelings towards her co-wife's child as towards her own child. The lot of an orphan, Tallensi say, even in a household full of women, is always a hard one. An orphan never receives the devoted attention and the selfless love which can be given only by its own mother. It has to depend upon the mercy and the sense of duty of women who are its mothers only in name.

602 736 This is the reason why small children left orphans are sometimes sent to live with their maternal grandmothers until they are big enough to fend for themselves. Some months after his mother's death I met Gundaat, a pathetic little chap of about 9. Talking about various things, we got on to the subject of mothers. Gundaat told me, in a tone of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

house apprised of what is going on in the quarters of the younger women and enabled to exercise benevolent supervision over them.

Her supervision is of special importance when any of the younger women is confined. She sees to it that mother and child are properly attended, that the rites of confinement and of emergence from seclusion are properly performed, that mother and babe are bathed in the prescribed way, and that the mother is given nourishing food. I was passing Ɔmara's homestead one afternoon, about a fortnight after the birth of a child to one of his wives, and called in. The new baby's mother was just coming out of the gateway with an empty water-pot on her head, and I noticed that she was looking far from well. Ɔmara's senior wife, a woman of sterling character, unsoured even by the leprosy that was rapidly getting a hold on her, was sitting outside in the shade. 'Where are you going to?' asked the older woman. 'To the water-hole,' replied her young co-wife. 'Don't go alone,' said the senior wife, 'I'll come with you'; and she rose to accompany the girl. For the first few weeks after the birth of her child a woman must not go about alone outside the homestead. She is still suffering from 'the dreams of a parturient woman (*pɔɣarɔɣah za'ahug*)'; that is, she is weak and liable to hallucinations or attacks of terror—or, as the natives think of it, to attacks from evil trees and stones—which might drive her mad. That was why the older woman accompanied the young mother. Many such incidents could be quoted in illustration of the concern shown by a senior wife for the welfare of her juniors.

Of course, not all senior wives exercise their role in a wise and unselfish spirit. A woman with an overbearing disposition may make life difficult for her juniors. One result will be that each woman tends to keep strictly to her own *dug* so as to avoid clashing with the senior wife or the other women, and co-operation between co-wives tends to follow the letter of convention rather than the spirit of family unity. Again, there are families in which the senior wife has through age, infirmity, or weakness of character resigned the effective supervision of the household to a younger co-wife, though she still remains the titular senior. But observation shows that on the whole senior wives conform to the pattern we have outlined above. Their position in the family, their responsibilities and privileges, shape them to this pattern.

It must be remembered, also, that the size and stage of development of a family have a great influence on the relations between co-wives. In a family like that of Da'amo'o of Tɔŋ-Dekpieŋ who has but recently set up in his own homestead, there are only three women, two being Da'amo'o's wives and the third his younger brother's wife. They are all young women round about the age of 20, two with an infant each and the other still a maiden (*pɔɣasarɔt*). In such a family the differentiation of *dug* from *dug* is rudimentary. The three girls work in co-operation and live together harmoniously like sisters and with no visible distinction

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

●596

of status or role. In another family of this kind the mistress of the house may be the family head's mother, and then she will exercise the role we have attributed to the senior wife in the preceding pages. In a joint family that has reached an advanced stage of development the women will be related to one another in a more complex scheme. Any particular woman may have one or more close co-wives, the other wife or wives of her husband; there may be, in addition, her co-wives at a remove, the wives of her husband's brothers; her own mother-in-law and perhaps a co-wife of this woman who is her mother-in-law by extension; and possibly daughters of the family. In such a family the wives of one man often feel a strong bond of solidarity in contradistinction to the wives of the other men of the family. The cleavages between the component family segments of the joint family are sharper than those between the wives of one man. As their children increase and get older, the women of each family segment aline themselves more strongly with their husband in his efforts to separate off. They begin to find the communal commissariat irksome and pressure from them often has a decisive influence on their husband's wish to 'go out on his own'.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

a proxy parent. As is natural, fathers and sons take different views of this situation. Sons do not think that they are showing a lack of filial loyalty when they go abroad. For, they argue, it is only a temporary absence and the money they earn will eventually accrue, in part at least, to the family exchequer. As has been mentioned previously, no man ever turns away a son who comes home from abroad, whether he brings any goods and money or not; and a son who does bring back 'things' and money is doubly welcome.

We said earlier that a father owns all his son's property. This might seem to contradict what was said about the independent ownership by a son of the livestock he acquires by breeding from a gift hen or by other means. The Tallensi themselves do not admit a contradiction in this. They see it as an instance of the gradation of rights and duties that is distinctive of their whole social organization. A father's over-right entitles him to veto his son's using his own property in ways that seem extravagant; but it would be an injustice rightfully resented by the son if he were stopped from using his fowl or goat or sheep for purposes that public opinion considers legitimate. Thus everybody would agree that a father who forbade a son from using his own fowls and guinea-fowls in his courtship, or from selling his own ground-nuts in order to buy a cloth, would be acting unfairly. The case of Kpana-Tee's grandson (p. 195) illustrates this principle.

The rights of a father and the rights of a son in the son's property are reconciled by the principle of reciprocity. If a man makes use of his son's goat or sheep he should, in due course, make an equivalent return; for example, by using one of his own sheep or goats to do something for the son. This object is immediately achieved if the son's property is used for the son's benefit, as in the payment of bride-price. There is no book-keeping, but in the long run the son should feel that the gains he has received are commensurate with the amount of his own property that has been used up. A proxy father should be more careful in this regard than a man's own father. A proxy father is less concerned about the future of his 'son' than the latter's own father would be and is therefore sometimes inclined to take selfish advantage of his paternal authority. Though they have no alternative but to submit, young men deeply resent unfairness of this sort, whether on the part of their own father or on that of a proxy father; and this may be the first stimulus to their determination to set up on their own.

This is epitomized in one of the reasons Tallensi regularly produce when they are asked why young men secede from their paternal households. They say: 'It is because of hens and eggs.' Every man has at least a hen or two, even if he has nothing else, and, as we know, his hen symbolizes the starting-point of his accumulation of property. But hens lay their eggs anywhere and this gives rise to petty quarrels. Anybody who finds an egg claims it and another member of the family may dispute

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 the claim. But if the head of the family claims an egg no one can gainsay him, so a young man might find himself left without any eggs to breed
596 from. That is why he wishes to be independent. It is a kind of rudi-
422 mentary myth summing up the economic causes of family fission. The point of interest is the emphasis on the inequitable behaviour of the 'father'. He uses his economic authority to his own advantage without making an equivalent return and thus prevents the 'son' from getting a start on the road of economic independence.

593 The adjustment of father's rights and son's rights has an added subtlety where cash is concerned. Supposing a young man returns from abroad with four or five pounds in cash that he has saved. According to the letter of custom he should hand all of it over to his father. But money, unlike a cow or a sheep, can be easily concealed and does not require attention; our young man can retain a part of his savings without his father's knowing of it. If it is his own father he may keep only a few shillings, particularly if he has recently been, or is about to be married and the money is wanted to pay his wife's bride-price. If it is his proxy father he will probably hand over only a pound or two, unless, again, the money is required for the bride-price of his wife; and then he will try not to hand over the money until his father-in-law actually demands the bride-price. It is common knowledge that this is the regular practice of young men returning from abroad. Fathers have no power to stop it, though most of them would like to; for up to a point, the young men are within their rights. Have they not 'taken their own legs and gone to get their money' by labour that is always arduous and sometimes dangerous? Again conflicts are inevitable, though as yet not more frequent than over other forms of property. For some men are only too apt to fritter away the money entrusted to them by a dependant before the time comes for it to be used for the benefit of the latter.

593 As we have mentioned before, one of the heaviest responsibilities a man bears on behalf of his son, or for a dependant standing in the same
584 economic and jural relationship to him, is in 'marriage affairs'. It is the bridegroom's father or proxy father who has to undertake the series of jural actions required from his paternal kin in order to legitimize the union. In marriage by arrangement (*pɔɣalak*) it is the bridegroom's father who starts the negotiations and carries them through. The young man himself hardly sees his bride, after his first few courting visits, until she is brought to his home. In marriage by elopement (*pɔɣazaŋɔr*) the bridegroom's father's consent is essential for the marriage to be properly concluded. While, as we have already indicated, a father never openly disapproves of a son's marriage, but on the contrary always displays apparent pleasure over it, he can easily cause it to break down by holding back the bride-price.

As we know already, the two significant jural acts in the conclusion of a marriage are the sending of the placation gifts (*lu sɔndaan*) and the

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER IX

GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN

603 WE have mentioned earlier that the relations of grandparents and grandchildren can be regarded as a foil to those of parents and 596 children. Tallensi themselves often draw the contrast. It is particularly striking with the paternal grandparents. For in a three-generation joint family the head is a grandfather and the senior *dugdaana* a grandmother. As head of the family the grandfather holds jural, economic, and ritual authority over all its members, including those whom he calls grandchildren, and there is a contrast between his authority and his familiarity in personal relations with his grandchildren. It reflects the contrast between the cleavage due to difference of status and role in terms of the lineage principle and the ties of cognatic kinship between grandchildren and paternal grandparents. This contrast does not occur with the maternal grandparents, in whose relations with a daughter's child the question of authority does not arise. When Tallensi say that a person can die happily if he or she has 'reached grandchildren (*paa yaas*)' they refer primarily to paternal grandparent and grandchild.

603 A grandchild of either sex refers to a grandfather of either line as
601 *ba-kpeem*, literally 'older father', or more formally as *yaab*, and to a grandmother of either line as *ma-kpeem*, literally 'older mother', or more formally as *yaab-pɔk*. Grandparents are addressed by personal name or, in the case of grandmothers, by the clan name used for them by their affines. A grandchild is described as *yaaŋ* by any of its grandparents and addressed by his or her own name.

603 The essential feature of the relationship between grandchild and grandparent is that they can tease and joke with each other and each other's spouses. As we have seen, between parent and child this would be almost equal to sacrilege. A grandchild can tweak his grandparent's ear—hence the diviner's sign for grandparent, pointing to the ear—or pretend to mock him or her as 'an old baggage (*bonkɔrəga*)' or play practical jokes on them such as snatching at their food. Grandparents, reciprocally, tease their grandchildren, calling them 'you ugly thing (*bonlɔrəga*)', or by similar epithets that would be insults in another genealogical context. This joking relationship holds for both sets of grandparents, and serves the purpose of reconciling the potentially conflicting elements in their relationship.[1]

With it goes an intimacy and mutual trust, more particularly between

[1] Cf. the similar usage between siblings-in-law, p. 120. Joking in the present case reconciles the familiarity permissible on the grounds of personal interest and the social equivalence of alternate generations, with the respect due to grandparents because of their age and their lineage status.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

105 THE DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION. Tale domestic institutions are very elaborate, and the organization of domestic life is subject to a considerable range of variation due to such factors as the economic position, size and age of the unit, the temperament and character of individuals, the social status of the senior male members, the distribution of economic and ritual specialization (craftsmen, diviners &c.), and so forth. To evaluate the full influence of these factors requires a mass of statistical information which we have not been able to obtain as yet; we must be content with merely indicating its range.

Tale society is essentially democratic; but differences of wealth are prominent. Chiefs and headmen, in virtue of the services they command, cultivate greater areas than any commoner, own much more live stock and have twice and three times as many wives. Both in its structure and in the organization of its domestic life, a chief's compound conforms to the same cultural pattern as the compound of the poorest plebeian; but it is economically entirely atypical. In every settlement, also, there are a few men of wealth considerably above the average. They always have a sufficiency of food, even in the leanest years. Chiefs, headmen, and wealthy men have therefore been excluded from the discussion in this paper.

592 Tale social organization has a well-defined spatial basis. The unit
● 596 of residence is a mud compound (*yir*—house) inhabited by a joint
341 family consisting of a group of men of close patrilineal kinship, their wives and children. Its architecture is significantly correlated to the structure and organization of the joint family at the particular phase it has reached in its development. One compound in three—14 out of 40, to be exact—has two or more entrance gateways (*zaŋor*),[1] each corresponding to a completely self-contained dwelling, and independent social unit consisting of one or more households. The plural entrance compound represents a stage in the process of segmentation through which the joint family passes in the course of about three generations, and which ends in complete fission and the setting up of several independent compounds.

592 The main gate is always owned by the head of the joint family
596 (*yirdaan*, owner of the house) the most senior (*kpeem*) of the group of

[1] Statistics quoted here and in subsequent paragraphs are derived from a sample of 40 compounds selected at random from a sociological census we made at Tongo.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

male agnates. He is *yirdaan* by virtue of indisputable succession which carries with it ritual responsibilities for the whole joint family, legal and moral duties and rights and valuable economic privileges. His younger brothers and his sons share his dwelling as a rule, ortho-cousins or nephews occasionally. Everything depends on factors such as those previously enumerated when it comes to the constitution of a particular compound. But in general, genealogical distance imposes corresponding spatial and social arrangements. Thus, the secondary gate of a plural gate compound[1] is usually owned by an ortho-cousin or nephew (classificatory brother or son) of the *yirdaan*, except for the special case of a man's first-born son.[2]

The single dwelling or the single-gate compound is the habitation of one or more households, each consisting of an adult male, his wife (or wives), and his children. A householder may have younger unmarried brothers or sisters or an old mother dependent on him. Every married man is a householder, but households vary greatly in status according to their degree of social and economic differentiation within the joint family. This is determined not only by the stage of development it has reached, but also by kinship factors and by those individual social and psychological characteristics which we have referred to before. A newly married man, for example, is to all intents and purposes part of the household to which he was attached prior to his marriage, but he has a small degree of autonomy which increases from year to year.

A newly married wife has a room in the quarters of her husband's mother, if she is alive, or of his senior wife. In due course, however, whether it be a man's first or later wife, he must build her separate quarters. Hence, in a well-differentiated household every wife has her own quarters (*dug*) partitioned off from those of her co-wives or her mother-in-law. Here she and her children—the primary family—live, and here she is supreme mistress. A woman's quarters consists

[1] Two gates are usual, three gates infrequent, and more than three gates found only in exceptional circumstances.

[2] It is taboo for the head of a compound and his first-born son to continue to use a single entrance after the latter has married and founded a family, though this taboo is never enforced until the younger man's children approach adolescence. But few men live long enough to see their first-born sons make their own gateways.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of sleeping-rooms and kitchens (to be described later) distributed roughly in a semicircle round an open space, 10 to 15 feet across, bounded on one side by a co-wife's quarters or a low partitioning wall. This little close (*dendɔŋo*) is the central place in the life of the family. Here it takes its meals in the dry season; here friends are received; here most of the routine of family life goes on. A man's principal ancestor shrines are kept in his mother's or senior wife's *dendɔŋo*; and there he performs many of the frequently recurring rites of the ancestor cult. The women of a single household have adjacent quarters. Their husband's mother or the senior wife occupies the central quarters; junior wives or son's wives are on either side of her, forming altogether a rough circle or segment of a circle. A householder who is not also head of the compound has no room of his own. He keeps his private possessions in his senior wife's sleeping-room. Apart from this, it is the cardinal principle of family life that a man must divide his time, his affection, and his supplies of food with absolute impartiality between his wives.

Within the compound two other kinds of rooms are of special importance for our theme, the granaries and the grinding-rooms. Every independent agricultural unit has its own granaries which are said to belong to the head of the unit. His granary (*boor*) is a man's most private and personal possession. No woman may enter it, nor any man not directly authorized by the owner. Ritual prohibitions associated with it closely identify a man's granary with his social personality. As one informant put it, with a flash of insight, 'Your granary is like your soul'.

One or more grinding-rooms (*neer*) belongs to every well-differentiated household. These are discussed later.

The family structure thus outlined is the basis of a domestic economy and of a configuration of moral, legal, religious, and personal relationships which can best be described as a compromise between strong centralizing or integrating tendencies and powerful differentiating tendencies. In the domestic economy of food, our sole concern in this paper, every unit in the system is completely autonomous in some respects and dependent upon a more comprehensive unit in others. It is a fluctuating compromise, slowly changing. Births, deaths, marriages, and their social consequences, even the mere lapse

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of time reflected in the growing up of children and the aging of parents, bring about changes which materially affect the food economy.

THE UNIT OF FOOD ECONOMY. Food is produced and consumed by what we shall call the unit of food economy. The following table, derived from the data for the 40 randomly selected compounds mentioned previously, shows the relation between this unit and those we have already described.

Compounds		*Gateways*	*Units of food economy*	*Households*	*Primary families*	*Productive men*	*Women*
Total .	40	56	58	77	114	107	124
Ratio .		1	·1	1·4	2·0	1·9	2·2

	Children
Total .	132
Ratio .	2·4

A unit of food economy thus corresponds, generally, to a single gateway,[1] and comprises more than one household. The man at the head of this unit holds the land from which it derives the major part of its sustenance and organizes the exploitation of this land. The productive men (i.e. those capable of agricultural labour, including boys over 15) jointly cultivate this land; the women and children jointly assist in sowing it and in such duties as scaring birds from the standing crops. At harvest time the men and boys cut the grain, women and girls carry it home in baskets. The head of the unit supervises the sorting of the grain, and is responsible for the selection and preservation of seed. He sees to the storage of the grain—the seed separately and specially carefully, the grain for consumption in the granary. The ground-nut crop is similarly handled by co-operative labour. It is a maxim that those who work together share the products of their labour. This applies not only to joint labour in the fields, but to the division of labour between the sexes and generations. Upon the men falls the most arduous agricultural labour, but the women have equally exacting duties connected with the preparation of food

[1] The two units of food economy in excess of the number of gateways represent pairs of full brothers who were economically independent of each other, but continued to occupy the same compound for kinship reasons. Four other units of food economy were in process of splitting up at the time the census was taken.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

for consumption. This division of labour runs through the whole of Tale domestic economy and is equally well evinced, e.g. in the organization of house-building and repairing. Boys and girls, too, have their duties in connexion with the care of the live stock and in the house.

The head of such a self-supporting unit has his own granary or granaries. Just as he is the final arbiter in agricultural matters, so he alone controls the distribution to the women of the grain jointly produced. In theory he could even sell the grain if he wished without consulting the men dependent on him; in practice, he dare not do so, for they would leave the compound at the first opportunity.

The entire unit of food economy thus draws its main supply of grain, the staple foodstuff, from a common source. But every household, every primary family, and indeed every individual other than young children has a degree of economic independence which is limited only by the obligations to the bigger unit. An industrious householder usually possesses some poultry and perhaps sheep and goats of his own, supplies a good deal of the minor crops consumed by his own wives and children, and even some grain to augment his wives' rations from the main store. Every woman, again, adds to the food supply of her primary family by her own efforts. If she is a market trader or a potteress, for example, she will have money of her own, will sometimes purchase extra foodstuffs and may invest in live stock which will eventually go to her sons. Her husband has no powers of disposal over her property. If he uses any of it, by her permission, it is a debt which must be repaid.

DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE AND CROPS. This system can best be understood in relation to Tale agriculture. The staple crop is millet (generically, *ki*) of which there are three kinds, early millet (*naara: pennisetum typhoideum*); guinea-corn (*ki* specifically, each variety being known by a special term, e.g. *kutɔk*, *kazii* &c.: *sorghum vulgare*); and late millet (*za: pennisetum spicatum*). These with a small amount of rice (*mui: oryza sativa*) occupy 92 per cent. of the area cultivated in the Zuarungu district.[1] The seasonal

[1] According to Mr. Lynn, who reports observations on 29 compounds in Zuarungu district, five being in Tale settlements. Four were somewhat larger and

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

variations in the ripening of crops makes it essential, as will be clear later, for a self-supporting unit to have a supply of every type of cereal, or face starvation at certain times of the year. Early millet is grown only on the compound farms (*saman*), land immediately surrounding the compounds and kept fertile by human and animal manure and by spreading the detritus of the kitchen midden. The compound farms at the disposal of a joint family consist of irregular patches of greatly varying size scattered throughout the area of settlement of their lineage. They are acquired by inheritance, succession, or gift from the head of one's joint family or lineage. How much of it a man has depends, thus, upon his seniority within the joint family and the lineage. The head of a joint family may cultivate 6 or 8 acres of compound farm; his younger brother and prospective heir, as head of an independent unit of food economy, may have only two acres or less allotted to him.[1] The compound farm is so precious that it is regarded as sacrilege to sell or abandon it.

Guinea-corn or late millet, which ripen several months after the early millet, are grown both on compound farms and on bush farms (*poog*) from one to four miles distant from the settlements of those who cultivate them. Bush farms also descend in the line of inheritance; but they can be bought or borrowed for a term of years. If the bush land belonging to his own joint family is limited, a man can always borrow as much as he requires. A head of a joint family may require no bush farm at all if he has a large compound farm; junior men, on the other hand, depend the more upon their bush farms the less compound land they have.[2] Compound land is the most fertile and most easily worked owing to its proximity. Those who have large compound farms (e.g. elders) are less liable to food shortage than those who have mainly bush farms (i.e. younger men).

richer than the average Tale compound, as they belonged to headmen or elders. Botanical names are taken from Mr. Lynn's report.

[1] Rough calculations based on a survey of farms made for us by Mr. D. S. Coomey. Mr. Lynn's records show that the Tale compound farms he measured vary from nearly 7 acres to under an acre; the average being 3·36 acres.

[2] Mr. Lynn found bush farms to vary from about 5 to 10 acres in extent. How much bush farm is cultivated depends, of course, upon the number of men co-operating and upon the food requirements of the unit, as well as upon the amount of *saman* they have.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

243 311 Most compounds also have at their disposal some low-lying alluvial land, (*boog*, valley) suitable for millet or rice. Junior members take up as much as they wish of this, provided it is not required by the head of the compound.

243 596 Reference to the table[1] given previously shows that, on an average, a single unit of food economy is dependent upon the labour of two men and comprises 1·4 households[1] and two primary families. The head of the unit of food economy is entitled to as much assistance as is necessary for the cultivation and harvesting of his compound farms from the junior men, his brothers, sons or nephews belonging to that unit, and to the help of all the women of the unit in sowing and harvesting. He is responsible for the supply of seed, for most of the implements, and he stores the grain in his granaries. In return, all who help him are entitled to share in the produce.

243 596 866 Boys and unmarried young men, dependent upon the wives of the head for cooked food, always assist him in the cultivation of his valley and bush lands. A junior householder need not. If he is ambitious, industrious, or merely planning for the day when he can break away from the control of the head, he cultivates his own bush farm. He supplies his own seed and the produce is his to dispose of as he pleases. Even an adolescent boy may be given a small plot (*sinsiar*) on his father's compound farm to cultivate, the produce of which is absolutely his own. This is one of the ways in which a boy acquires a few chickens and lays the foundations for the economic independence which he gradually reaches in the course of years. Every independent cultivator thus augments the food supply of his own household or family, but not of the whole unit.

244 596 422 This differentiation is even more marked with subsidiary crops, of which the most important is ground-nuts (*sukpaam: arachis hypogea*). The head of a self-supporting unit interplants ground-nuts with his early millet on the compound farm. The crop yielded is his property, though any member of the unit can help himself to some for food. But, in addition, almost every man and boy able to wield a hoe and most adult women have their own ground-nut fields (*sukpalay*). These are made on patches of compound land unsuitable for other crops and

[1] Actually 50 per cent. (28 out of 58) units of food economy have two or more households.

[1] [See cat. 116, p.241 — Analyt.]

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

not required at the time, and always borrowed specifically for this purpose from kinsmen and friends. Women rarely obtain their ground-nut fields from their husbands. They prefer to beg land from their own cognatic kinsmen, thus emphasizing their absolute independence of their husbands as regards this crop.

For this reason they never receive assistance from their husbands with the hoeing and planting of their ground-nut fields. A son often assists his mother; or young women 'invite' (*pooh*) a couple of young kinsmen of their husband to hoe their ground-nut fields in return for a very good meal, the grain for which the woman generally provides from her own resources. Many, again, have simply to rely upon their own skill with the hoe. The ground-nut crop thus gained is the woman's to consume or sell, as she pleases.

Of the remaining subsidiary crops, the most important—though less important than ground-nuts—are the legumes, Bambara beans (*suma: voandzeia subterranea*), cow-peas (*tia: vigna sinensis*) and geocarpa beans (*sulempie: kerstingiella geocarpa*); and the root crops, frafra potatoes (*pesha: coleus dysentericus*) and sweet potatoes (*nyumhma'ala: ipomea batatas*). Bambara beans and frafra potatoes are grown by the more energetic younger men on borrowed strips of compound farm after the millet is cut. Cow-peas are planted along the edges of compound farm by the head when he sows his early millet.

Vegetables are the concern and the property of women. The head of a unit of food economy every year allots a small patch of land, some 100 square yards or less, immediately beside the compound wall to each woman with a kitchen of her own. Here she sows her *naggena* (*gynandropsis pentaphylla*), some ocro (*ma'ana: hibiscus esculentus*), *bet* (*h. sabdariffa*), *beris* (*h. cannabinus*). The latter three vegetable plants are also grown like cow-peas and *neri* (*cucumis melo*), alongside the paths which border the compound farm. Thus as they grow and ripen the women can get at them easily without injuring the millet. A woman's vegetable patch is always hoed for her by her husband as the produce is for their common use. The leaves of the cow-pea plant (*tia: vide supra*) are used as a vegetable known as *benit*, and are plucked for this purpose by the wives of the man who planted the *tia*; and the same rule applies to the use of the *neri* seed as a soup ingredient.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

OTHER SOURCES OF FOOD SUPPLY. A particular household at a particular time may have quite a number of sources of food supply besides the fields of the unit of food economy to which it belongs. Next to their farms the most important source of food supply for the Tallensi is the market, especially in the lean months. A completely empty granary imposes upon the head of the self-supporting unit the duty of finding grain. This is when he falls back on his live stock and sells or barters them for grain.[1] As long as he has some grain to ration out, however frugally, he will not buy for common consumption. Each household and each primary family must exert itself to make up the deficient grain supply. The junior householders and the women—the keenest and most inveterate market traders—exploit the resources of the grain market. Those who have a little money go as far as Nabte or Mampuru land, countries rich in grain two or three days' march away, to buy guinea-corn, late millet, or maize. They bring back the grain in bags of roughly 20 to 40 lb. weight. The usual procedure is for the purchaser to bring home his or her grain, set aside a small portion—perhaps 5 to 10 lb.—for his or her own consumption and retail the rest at the local market so as to realize the original outlay or a few pence more. The principal profit consists in the small quantity eaten. Many women turn the grain or pulse they buy into cooked food, a small proportion of which goes to feed their husbands and children, but most of which is sold in the market at a profit and the proceeds re-invested in grain. But very many people have to be content with purchasing small quantities in the local markets. A man may sell a few chickens or guinea-fowl or a goat or something he has made, like an adze-shaft or a bow; a woman sells some ground-nuts, dried vegetables, shea nuts, shea butter or some dawa-dawa seed balls (*kpɔlug*) to buy the grain. In this way does the market help to eke out the domestic supply of grain.

This source of grain supply is wholly subject to the principle of differentiation of subordinate units within the unit of food economy. A woman's market-purchases, like her ground-nuts, go to feed her

[1] A bull is usually reckoned as worth about 30*s*., a heifer £2, a sheep from 3*s*. to 6*s*., a goat from 2*s*. 6*d*. to 4*s*. Prices depend on the season, and the age and condition of the animal. A bull exchanges for about 40 large baskets of unthreshed grain, sheep, and goats in proportion.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

own family. She may, as an act of grace, give some of this food to her husband or to a co-wife with whom she is on friendly terms; but she is not compelled to do so. A junior householder thus augments the food supply for his own wives and children. If he comes into possession of a large amount of grain by his own exertions he will generally make a present of a small quantity to the head of the unit to which he belongs; but, again, this is an act of goodwill, not an obligation. A kind-hearted head of a compound may occasionally present a meagre dish of grain to the wife of a younger head of a self-supporting unit, if they are obviously on the verge of starvation; otherwise, self-supporting units in the same compound never assist one another with grain, in the ordinary course of events.

There are other more incalculable means by which food is brought into the household and family. Cereals are sometimes obtained during the hunger months by women from their paternal kinsmen. A marriageable daughter, again, means a succession of suitors bringing gifts of money, guinea-fowls, and various other comestibles to her mother. Wild sources of food are fully exploited. Fruits of the shea-tree (*ta'ay: butyrospermum parkii*) save many a family from the worst straits of hunger, as does the pulp of the dawa-dawa (*doo: parkia filicordea*) pods. These trees have an enormous economic value, as will be evident later. The baobab-tree (*to'o: adansonia digitata*) has a fruit with a floury, sweetish pulp which is relished much as sweetmeats are by ourselves, and its leaves are used to make soup. It is generally found as a shade-tree outside a compound, and women readily get permission from the head of the compound to pluck the leaves. Leaves of the local elm (*nuom: celtis integrifolia*) are also used for soup.[1] Some grasses and fungi serve this purpose too, and small children, who are adepts at foraging for themselves, can often be seen out in groups collecting them.

From the table quoted above it will be seen that one man, on the average, supports himself, 1·2 women, and 1·2 children, over the age of infancy—roughly 3·4 people; but it is clear from the sociological outline given above that any such estimates hold only very approximately in view of the many supplementary sources of grain supply,

[1] We have seen elm-trees in *toyhens* (sacred groves) and in the bush (where of course, any one can pluck the leaves) but not as shade trees in front of compounds.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The meat, already putrescent, is nevertheless enjoyed despite its stench. Fresh eggs, being potential chickens, are never eaten; but addled eggs are much appreciated by children, who bake them in ashes. Children also eat field and domestic mice, a species of toad, and harmless snakes, all of which they shoot with miniature bows and arrows in the later months of the dry season. These things are despised by adolescents and adults who, however, appreciate bigger rodents like moles and water voles. In short, meat supplies are a matter of chance, vary greatly with the season, as will be clearer later, and though much desired, form but a small part of the bulk of food consumed.

FATS AND SEASONINGS. Fats and seasonings have a very important place in Tale cookery, and, like vegetables, are the woman's responsibility. But they are mainly market commodities and a man will frequently give his wife money to purchase them. The only fat used is shea butter (*kpaam*). It is obtainable all the year round. It is made of the nuts of the shea fruit (*kpi*) which are carefully preserved after the fruits have been eaten.

Dawa-dawa seed balls (*kpɔlug*) are made by boiling the seeds of the dawa-dawa fruits. The balls are sold at prices varying from a tenth of a penny for one the size of a large marble to threepence for one the size of a cricket ball.

The laborious processes of manufacture involved prevent many women from making their own shea-butter and dawa-dawa seed balls. Others, who can command the assistance, e.g. of daughters, often prepare enough to have a surplus for sale.

Red pepper (*nanzuub*) is grown in small quantities by a few men for sale in the market, and much is imported. It is sold at about a halfpenny for a handful.

Rock salt (*yaarim*) is sold in the market by regular traders who fetch it from the south, a small heap (about ½lb.) for a halfpenny.

Zim, the ash of valley grasses, and *bakaa*, the ash of early millet stalks, are prepared by the women and are stored in large baskets or calabashes for their own use and for sale. They are used as salt substitutes.

THE PRODUCTIVE CYCLE AND THE FOOD CYCLE. We have seen how the domestic organization of the Tallensi works in relation to the supply of grain and the other main raw materials of their diet. We

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

596 must now consider how these raw materials are consumed by the unit of food economy. It will be impossible in the scope of this paper to discuss every social situation affecting the domestic economy of food, since there is hardly a social act in which something edible or masticable does not participate, be it only a piece of kola-nut or a plug of tobacco. We shall refer briefly, therefore, to the most conspicuous types of situations in which food plays a part, and discuss more fully the domestic consumption of food in the ordinary routine of family life. We emphasize again that our purpose is to give an ethnographic account of these facts, as we have been able to observe them in a single year. We have not the quantitative information to allow us to venture upon a deeper sociological analysis.

262 433 241 Tale food economy has a marked seasonal periodicity, as is to be expected in an agricultural society. It is this seasonal rhythm which links the supply of foodstuffs with their distribution and consumption. This correlation emerges readily from a calendrical tabulation in which the agricultural and other productive activities are set down side by side with the facts pertaining to the utilization of the food supply. Agriculture in Tale-land is a hazardous enterprise, chiefly because of the uncontrollable natural phenomena upon which a successful crop depends, above all, the correct distribution of rainfall. Good harvests and bad harvests succeed one another erratically and the natives can never predict from one year to the next. Their primitive methods of farming, too, mean that they extract only half as much out of the land as it is capable of producing. 'Nevertheless,' says Mr. Lynn,[1] 'in a good season . . . nobody is short of food. The area of land cultivated is adequate and the system of farming is successful.' But the margin of security for the average householder is extremely small, at any time. We have no means of estimating how representative the observations made by us in 1934 may be; the natives considered it to be a fair year. For our purpose, however, it chanced fortunately, since we were able to observe more easily the relations between supply and consumption of foodstuffs in the average household than might have been possible in either a very good or a very bad year.

[1] *Op. cit.* Mr. Lynn records that in both 1930 and 1931 the harvest was bad owing to locusts and adverse rains. In 1934 the neighbouring areas were worse off than Tale-land.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

312 natives regard this water as unsuitable for their own consumption, but use it as drinking-water for fowls, for building purposes, and to wash in. There are no special rights of use attached to water-holes, but as a rule each water-hole serves a group of compounds within a radius of not more than 300 yards.

262 A proper meal, according to Tale values, must consist of cooked food; and two meals a day are considered to be necessary for the satisfaction of ordinary needs. When the granaries are full and the women are given grain liberally this standard can be reached, but not in the lean months.

596 The owner of the granary distributes grain periodically to all his wives and those of the householders dependent upon him. He never 261 descends into the granary himself, but appoints a young man, pre- 264 ferably unmarried, to do so, lest the women complain of favouritism. Each woman receives the same measure regardless of her status or of the size of her family. Absolute equality is stressed. Even a young wife without a kitchen receives an equal share. The measure, a small basket or calabash, remains the same throughout the seasons, but the period for which the housewife must make it last varies. When grain is plentiful they receive the measure daily. They will cook food at noon and at sunset, and some will make enough to suffice for the next morning's breakfast. In times of scarcity the same amount of grain has to last two or three days. It is left now to the individual household and family to supplement its food resources as best it can. If a noon meal is cooked at this time, it is made of grain obtained from the ancillary sources we have previously described. Every woman carefully considers her supply, limiting the number of meals so that the family may be assured of the evening meal as regularly as possible.

562 However, shortage of food is not alone responsible for the uncer- 264 tainty of meals. Woman is the pivot of the whole domestic life. She 252 carries on her duties throughout pregnancy till the moment of labour approaches, and again as soon as her period of confinement is over (three or four days). But she is also absolute mistress of her home, and when she refuses to cook her husband cannot compel her to. Nevertheless, a woman will miss cooking a meal only for very good reasons, e.g. when she has been working in the fields late, sowing or harvesting, or beating the floors of the compound, or has been away

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

for firewood. A woman with a small child never omits to cook a little for it, whatever the circumstances. The cooking routine also becomes upset under the stress of seasonal activities. When a whole family goes to work at a bush farm or to a fishing expedition, some ground-nuts or dry guinea-corn is taken along to chew, and no cooking will be done until evening.

Each woman is responsible for the provision of meals for her husband and family. In certain situations co-wives co-operate for the common good. Thus when building operations take place, or a man has hired or 'invited' labour the co-wives cook in turn to provide food for the men. On such occasions the owner of the granary allots a special share of grain for the labourers' porridge to the woman whose turn it is to cook for them.

Mutual assistance between co-wives occurs only when a woman is confined or ill. Then her co-wife (a wife of her husband or his brother) cooks for her and her family. The confined woman provides her own produce and firewood and the cooking is done in her kitchen. This is the duty and prerogative of co-wives. Only as a last resort would the husband's mother or sister cook for her in those circumstances. When a young wife shares her mother-in-law's quarters she does all the household tasks; but when she shares those of a senior wife, they assist each other and cook in turn.

The standard meal of the Tallensi is *sayab ni ziet*, meal porridge and soup. Porridge is prepared of flour and, depending upon the season and what a man has in his grain-store, it is made of early millet, guinea-corn or late millet. Sometimes also maize (generally purchased) or cow-peas or rice is used. When root crops are in season they are cooked instead of porridge, but not because porridge becomes monotonous to the Tallensi, or they wish to vary the diet (see Appendix), it is done in order to make the grain last longer. 'Porridge is food, it makes you strong', and there can never be too much of it is the Tale point of view. 'But if you eat too much of the other things they spoil your belly'.[1]

The preparation of porridge is very simple. Flour is not preserved

[1] A Tale friend enquired what kind of food he would be given in our country, and when told that he would eat meat, fish, bread, and eggs, he exclaimed, 'What, no porridge? I call that starvation.'